

**February 19, 2020**

**Chair Chuck Riley**

**Senate Committee on General Government & Emergency Preparedness**

**Submitted by: Dr. Jeffery Steiner**

**RE: Testimony in Support of HB 4051, Establishes Hemp Commission**

Chair Riley, Vice-Chair Girod, and committee members, my name is Dr. Jeffrey Steiner and I am Associate Director of the Global Hemp Innovation Center at Oregon State University. I have prepared remarks on HB 4051 that stress the importance of establishing a statewide hemp commodity commission.

HB 4051 establishes the Oregon Hemp Commission to enable the hemp industry to continue to develop, maintain its competitive position, and expand markets for hemp and hemp products through the conduct of research, education, and information programs. Such efforts could support the wide range of industry sector participants, a majority of whom are hemp farmers. The Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station and OSU Extension Service would be seen as partners to this new commission.

A hemp commission would play a vital role in identifying the most pressing challenges faced by this new industry in the different production regions around the state. A commission could help prioritize research initiatives that find solutions to increase crop productivity and profitability, and foster the use of sustainable agricultural practices. Examples of pressing issues could be the coexistence of hemp with other crops, effective management of insect and disease pests, and prevention of soil erosion and escape of nutrients from fields. A hemp commission could also oversee research into the development of new varieties for use in Oregon and around the world, as well as create new processes and products for hemp, and support trade and marketing activities that provide more places to sell hemp products.

Commodity commissions are a proven model for advancing the competitiveness of agricultural commodities. Oregon State University already partners with other Oregon commodity commissions that support and promote both traditional and specialty crops and other high-value products produced and marketed in the state. Establishment of an Oregon Hemp Commission would help do the same for hemp.

From the perspective of the Global Hemp Innovation Center at Oregon State University, we understand how Oregon's unique geographic location makes it the most productive

hemp producing region in the world. Through support from a hemp commission, the world-class scientists at Oregon State and other universities in the state could be leveraged to find solutions to the challenges the hemp industry faces today, and create the innovations and solutions that are needed to advance all aspects of this emergent industry in the future. Doing so is important to maintain Oregon's position as a national and world leader for hemp research and production.

Chair Riley and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to speak with you on this bill today.